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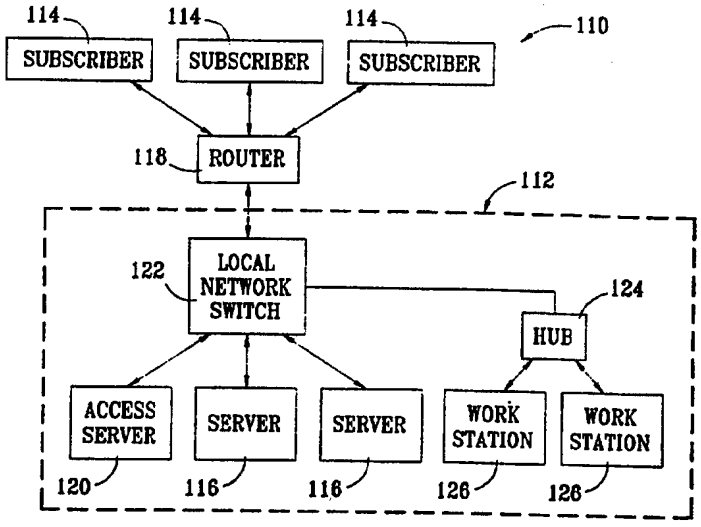

(57) Abstract

A central medical record repository (200) for a managed health care organization accepts and stores medical record documents in any format from medical service providers (114). The repository then identifies the document using information automatically extracted from the document and stores the extracted data in a document database (210). The repository links the document to a patient by extracting from the document demographic data identifying the patient and matching it to data stored in a patient database (216). Data is extracted automatically from medical records containing "unstructured" or free-form text (502) by identifying conventional organization components in the text and is organized by executing rules that extract data with the aid of such information. Documents for a patient are retrieved by identifying the patient using demographic data.